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L E T T E R

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Delivered by Mr. WOOD,

T O T H E *K*

COMMISSIONERS

FOR REBUILDING

The BRIDGE at *B*RISTOL,

A N D

Opening the AVENUES to it,

At their Publick Meeting held at the GUILDHALL  
on MONDAY the 4th. of AUGUST.

Printed and published at their Request.



B R I S T O L:

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1760





# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE PUBLICK.

*W*HEN I wrote the following Letter I little thought it would ever have been submitted to such a public Inspection; but as the Commissioners were pleas'd to desire it, I could not refuse; especially as my Intention in offering my Designs to them was to give all the Assistance in my Power to a Work so important as the rendering the several Avenues to the Bridge as commodious as possible, must, in the Opinion of every Body be thought. I chose to publish the Letter as it was offer'd, without the least Alteration, as also to expose the same hasty imperfect Drawings, which (as the Gentlemen have adjourn'd their Meeting to a future Day) I shall have Time to correct; particularly as to the Construction of the Bridge itself; another more digested Plan of which will then be offer'd.

AS these Plans are thus unexpectedly to me laid before the Public, and this Letter printed, and as I am conscious of their being imperfect, whatever Objections shall be made to them in Print I shall take no Trouble to answer: But if any Gentleman will be so kind as by Letter to communicate his Objections to me, I shall either endeavour to obviate them, or, as I am always open to Conviction, shall thankfully acquiesce in his Opinion.

JOHN WOOD.







A

# L E T T E R

Delivered by Mr. WOOD,

To the COMMISSIONERS for rebuilding  
the BRIDGE at BRISTOL, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

INVITED by your public Advertise-  
ment, I take the Liberty to offer to  
your Consideration a PLAN for re-  
building the Bridge, and opening  
the Avenues to it, which I hope will meet  
with your Approbation. I did not see the  
AdVERTISEMENT before last Monday, and there-  
fore beg you will excuse the Drawings not  
being so neat as they should have been, had  
I had the good Fortune to have seen the Ad-  
vertisement before; for the greatest Part of  
my Time since Monday has been employ'd  
in taking an accurate Plan of the Premises  
and all the Levels.

I OBSERVE by the Act of Parliament, that  
there is a Provision for making good the Da-  
mages that may be done to Saint *Nicholas*  
Church, by which I apprehend it has been  
by some thought necessary to take down that  
Church, or at least some Part of it; and as  
there is a Provision likewise for making a  
temporary

temporary Bridge, I apprehend such an one has been thought necessary, but I humbly presume that both these Expences may be entirely avoided.

As I have not the Pleasure to be personally acquainted with many of the Commissioners, so my Plan has been exhibited to very few ; and therefore it appears before you unsupported by Interest, and must depend upon your impartial Judgements, and its own few Merits for Success : But I hope you will give this Letter a patient Reading, and the Plan a thorough Examination ; and if I have not sufficiently explain'd it, or if any Objections shall be made to any Part of it, I hope you will, Gentlemen, send for me to Mr. PARKER's in *Broad-street*, (where I am waiting) to give you any farther Explanation that shall be thought necessary ; and to answer the Objections that may be made to the Design as well as I am able.

I HAVE survey'd the present Bridge, and find that in its original State it was Nineteen Feet wide, and without Houses on it, in the Taste all the Bridges were built about the Thirteenth Century, several Examples of which are now in being, as at *Glocester*, *Worcester*, and *Upton* over the *Severn* ; at *Bath* and *Melksham* over the *River Avon* ; at *Chester* over the *Dee* ; at *Warrington* over the *Mersey* ; at *Biddeford* over the *Towridge* ; and at *Barnstable* over the *Taw*. In Process of Time, in order to build the Houses, Arches of two or three Feet wide (the exact Dimensions

sions of which I have not taken, being unnecessary to my Design) were turn'd, from the Angles of the Bastions of the Piers, parallel to the Bridge, some Eight or Ten Feet distant from it, to support the Floors of the Houses; the Timbers of which have about Three Feet bearing on the Front of the Bridge, are supported again by this secondary Arch, and then project considerably over the Water to support the Back Fronts of the Houses.

As this is the Case, it is no difficult or dangerous Undertaking to take down all the Houses on the Bridge, and the secondary Arches, and to reduce the present Bridge to its original State.

IN the Plan No. 1 you have an accurate Survey of the present Bridge, the Streets leading to it, and all the Ground to the East of it, as far as *Temple-street* on the South-Side, and the Corner of *Peter-street* on the North, shadow'd with Indian Ink, on which I have describ'd, in red, the Lines of Building I would advise to be follow'd.

IF a Line be drawn from the Letter A, which is near about the Door of the House of the late Mr. HOULTON, Grocer, on the East Side of *High-street*, to the Front Door of the *Pelican-Inn* in *Thomas-street*, it will run nearly parallel to the Old Bridge, and about Sixty Feet to the East of it; therefore if a Bridge be built Forty Feet wide, and this Line the East Boundary of it, there will be Room (after the Houses on the East Side of  
the

the Bridge, and the secondary Arches on that Side are taken down) to build a new Bridge without interrupting the Passage of the present Bridge, which I would advise to remain as the temporary one.

You will be pleas'd to observe, that the Line A B cuts off the North East End of *Thomas-street* about Thirty Feet, and intersects the Fronts of the Houses on that Side of the Street a little above the *Pelican-Inn* Door; it likewise cuts off all the Houses at the South East End of the Bridge about Sixty Feet down *Tucker-street* from the Corner of the Bridge.

THE Line C D, which is parallel to the Line A B at Forty Feet Distance, and terminates the Breadth of the Bridge to the West, runs about Ten Feet to the East of *St. Nicholas Church*, and intersects *Thomas-street* on the West Side about Sixty Feet from the N. West Corner; so that there will be no Occasion to take down any Houses on the West Side of that Street, nor will there be Occasion to DESTROY the Houses from the Corner of *Redcliff-street* to the Water's Edge at E; although the Proprietors of those Houses must have some Acknowledgement made 'em for the Damages they will receive by the Streets being rais'd before the Fronts of their Houses, as I shall explain presently.

As the Houses in *Tucker-street* (I mean on the North Side of it) are extreamly bad and ruinous, I presume to advise that a Key Wall be built on the Edge of the River from O to O,



O, and that parallel to it Forty Feet distant be a regular Front of Building from F to G ; that at G a Street of Forty Feet wide be return'd down to the End of *Temple-street*, having a regular Pile of Building on each Side from O to M, and from G to G ; and by this Means an extream good Communication will be made from *Temple-street* to the Bridge, and to *Redcliff-street*. And I will take upon me to assert, that the improv'd Ground Rents of that Spot of Ground will very well pay for the Purchase of the Houses, and that there are Builders enough that would be glad to take Ground on a Freehold or Leasehold Tenure and build ; it being a Spot as well situated for Trade as most in the City of *Bristol*.

THIS Key-Wall O O determines the South Side of the River, as the new Key-Wall on the North Side continued in a straight Line to P would determine the North Edge of the River. In the Middle between the Letters P and O, I would propose a Bridge of Three equal Arches, each Forty Feet span, the Arches to spring Two Feet and a Half above High Water Mark, in order that there may be no Lessening of the Water-Way during the whole Flow of the Tide ; or ONE GRAND SINGLE ELLIPTICAL ARCH of One Hundred and Ten Feet span, as shall be thought most adviseable: A Plan of such an Arch I would have made, had I had Time. The Water Way of the four present Arches taken all together does not exceed One Hundred Feet at the springing of the Arches, therefore

B

Three



Three Forty Feet Arches will be sufficient. The Propriety of having all the Arches equal, and the Cornice and Ballustrade to run level, I will explain by and by.

As the Houses on the South Side of the Shambles to the Water's Edge are to be destroy'd, I would humbly presume to advise, that a Line of Building with a regular Front be made from Q to Q, and before it a Terras Fifty Feet wide, rais'd upon Arches in the Manner of my Parades at *Bath*; the Vaults form'd by these Arches will make very commodious Warehouses to the Houses; and as the Level of the Terras will be at least Twenty Feet above High Water Mark, if the new Key-Wall be rais'd about Three or Four Feet, the Plat-form S S S P will make a commodious Key for the Use of those Houses. From the East Corner of this new-intended Building I would return a Street Forty Feet wide up into *Peter-street*, and so along *Dolphin-Lane* into *Wine-street*.

THE improv'd Ground Rents of this Pile of Building, with the Return into *Peter-street* from K to K, I may venture to assert will pay likewise.

THE Line Q Q may, if thought adviseable, be brought some few Feet more to the South to give more back Ground to the Houses; it will be only lessening the Platform S S S P.

THE Ground at the Point C I would advise to be rais'd about Seven Feet higher than at present, and that will make *Nicholas-street* have

have a very gentle Fall from the Market to the Point C, and by this Means there will be a Necessity of stopping up *Nicholas-Gate* entirely; and I would humbly presume to advise, that *Nicholas-street* be widen'd to Forty Feet, to make a good Way to the Market.

As the Point C will be Seven Feet higher than it is at present, the Fall from *Mary-port-street* to that Point will not be above Half an Inch to a Foot; from the Point C quite over the Bridge to the South End of it will still be a more gentle Fall. The Point A at the South End of the Bridge (Plan No. 4) is about Thirteen Feet above the Ground at the *Pelican-Inn* Door, and therefore the Fall from the End of the Bridge to that Point will be the same as from the Point C to *Mary-port-street*. You will see these Falls better describ'd in Plan No. 3, which is a Section of the Ground from the *Pelican-Inn* Door to the Corner of *Mary-port-street*. And here you will please to observe, that the Ground at *Redcliff-street* End will be rais'd so high that the Houses from Mr. MARSH's Shop to the Water Edge (which before I have advis'd not to be DESTROY'D) must yet be obliged to be re-built, and therefore the Proprietors will require some Acknowledgment for the Damages they shall sustain.

PLAN No. 2 is the Plan of the Building according to my Intention, divested of all the Lines of the old Buildings. And here you will be pleas'd to observe, that as the Bridge makes a considerable Angle Eastward with

High-

*High-street*, the beginning to turn to the East so far up in *High-street* will sling the Bridge so direct to *Thomas-street*, that you may see from the Corner of *Mary-port-street* a considerable Distance above the *Bell* in *Thomas-street*.

You likewise will be pleas'd to observe, that the Houses from the Corner of *Redcliff-street* to the Water's Edge, by being kept in the same Line they are at present, will make so commodious a Space at the South End of the Bridge, that there will be no Occasion to widen the Entrance of *Redcliff-street* at all; and it will be of such Advantage, that the whole Bridge will stand entirely detached from any Houses, and there will be a commodious Space for Stairs at the South West Corner of the *Bridge*.

BUT if the Gentlemen think it wou'd be a losing of Ground, I wou'd advise them to put the Fronts of the Buildings according to the Red dotted Lines in the Plan No. 2.

As the Gentlemen have a Power to purchase Houses in all the Streets for a hundred Yards from the End of the present *Bridge*, if at that Distance along the *Back* you begin to rise, the Ascent to the *Bridge* will be as gentle as from *Thomas-street* to the *Bridge*.

THE Distance from the *Pelican-Inn* Door to *Mary-port-street* is eight hundred Feet, and according to my Intention the Fall will be along the whole Length; and therefore if it may be thought not adviseable to have so long a Draught intirely against the Collar, there may be three or four short Flats made in the



Length ; particularly upon the *Bridge*, without much encreasing the Ascent, which brings me to explain the Propriety of having all the Arches equal.

WHERE the Center Arch is larger than the side ones, it is when the Banks on each Side of the River are level, and therefore the Decline on each Side will be equal, and the whole Bridge a beautiful Object ; but as the Ground in your Case is lower on the South Side of the River than on the North, to have a Bridge thus constructed, wou'd be very improper, as you must necessarily descend from the Center of the *Bridge* towards the North ; for what ? To make the Ascent from the End of the *Bridge* to *Mary-port-street*, as Difficult as it is at present. — Again, if the Arches rise higher at the North End than at the South End, and the Cornice and Ballustrade rake with the Declivity of the Hill, it will produce a disagreeable Object. Whereas having the three Arches equal and the Ballustrade level, the whole Bridge will be one beautiful Object and all Ends answered ; for you may ascend from the North End of the *Bridge* and descend from the South without any Impropriety ; nay, there may be a Declivity all over the Bridge in the Passage over it, without affecting the East or West Fronts of it at all, as explained by Plan No. 4.

You will be pleas'd to observe, that according to my Design, there will be so commodious a Communication between the *Back*,  
Peter-

*Peter-street*, and all that End of the Town with *Redcliff*, *Thomas*, and even *Temple-street*, that the Building another Bridge at the End of *Hawkins's-Lane* will be useless.

THE Approach from *Redcliff*, *Thomas*, and *Temple-streets*, will be very grand and noble; for as soon as you come to the Points T T you will have a View of a regular Pile of Building of four hundred and sixty Feet in length, supported on Arches, which, if built of Rough Stone, will give such a Strength and Beauty to the whole, that it will be such an Object as scarcely to be equall'd in the Kingdom; and again, coming from *Peter-street*, or from *Highb-street*, you will have a regular Key and Pile of Building fronting you on the opposite Shore.

THE Method I wou'd humbly advise you to proceed in, if I shall be so happy as to have my Plan approved of, is this: First, to pull all the Houses down on the East Side of the Bridge, from *St. Nicholas-Gate*, to the Corner of *Tucker-street*, and all the Houses on the East Side of *Thomas-street*, as far as necessary, then the present Bridge wou'd remain as a Temporary One. I wou'd likewise advise, that the Brush-maker's House at the East End of *Nicholas-Gate*, be likewise pull'd down, and then there may be a Passage quite from *Highb-street* to the South End of the Bridge, six Feet wide for Foot Passengers, inclosed from the Road for Carriages, made with the Materials that shall be found proper in pulling down the old Houses, of which I make no Doubt



Doubt but there will be sufficient. The Secondary Arches on the East Side of the Bridge, and likewise so much of the Bastions of the Piers as will interrupt the Building of the new Bridge may be safely taken away. The Reason I wou'd advise the pulling down the Houses in *Thomas-street* immediately is, that you wou'd have the Space comprehended in Plan No. 1, under the Letters E F B D E intirely clear and open, and the Toll-Gate for collecting the Tolls on the Temporary Bridge, may be conveniently erected between the Letters Z and Z, and the dotted Lines from the East End of *Nicholas-Gate* to Figure Four represents the East Boundary of the Foot Passage. Then the new Bridge may be built without any Interruption at all, and while that is building the Key O O, and the Piles of Building Q Q, F G, G G, O M, and K K, may be going on with.

My utmost Wish is to be employed as Architect by the Commissioners, and if they shou'd approve of my Plan, I shall always study, by Diligence and Integrity, to give them and the Public Satisfaction. Being always desirous of shewing myself,

GENTLEMEN,

*Your most obedient humble Servant,*

AUGUST the 4th,  
1760.

JOHN WOOD.

